

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 34

WASHINGTON TIMES
21 March 1985

MORNING BULLETIN

Is covert action a tough-guy cop-out?

Mary Belcher reports from the White House: Covert action "tends to be a cop-out," former Secretary of State Alexander Haig yesterday told the White House Outreach Working Group on Central America.

"It enables the president to go to bed every night and say, 'Boy, I'm doing something tough' and get up every morning and be loved by the American people," Mr. Haig said.

But in Nicaragua, the United States has chosen a covert course of action and it should not abandon it, he warned. And he added:

"If we suddenly cut the freedom fighters loose . . . what a dreadful message it will send to every other threatened republic in this hemisphere and every developing leader throughout the world.

"We should never delude ourselves that we Americans can wash our hands of the moral issues at stake and the vital strategic interests at stake" in Central America.

If President Reagan stumps for \$14 million in covert aid for Contra rebel forces in Nicaragua with the "same vigor" with which he lobbied for MX-missile funding, Mr. Haig predicted, "we're going to do what's right."

Mr. Haig will speak today at the National Press Club on "Europe and the World," the title of a recent Hudson Institute study he directed.